

## CLAIMS

1. A method of determining the presence or absence of a target microbe in a liquid water sample, said method consisting of the steps of:

a) combining a liquid water sample and a powdered medium having at least one nutrient indicator, said nutrient indicator being selected from the group consisting of: orthonitrophenyl-B-D-glucuronide; B-napthalamide-B-D-glucuronide;  $\alpha$ -naphthol-B-D-glucuronide; and methylumbelliferyl-B-D-glucuronide, to form a mixture;

b) incubating the mixture for a time sufficient to produce a detectable color signal indicative of the presence or absence of a target microbe;

c) observing the signal to determine the presence or absence of said target microbe in said sample.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein said detectable color signal is a visible color signal.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein said detectable color signal is a fluorescent color signal.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein said medium lacks a gelling agent.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein said powdered medium is free of target microbes.